

Town of Farragut Education Committee Minutes

February 5, 2013

Attending: Mark Littleton, Nancy Wentz, Mike Singletary, Russell Barber, Gary Palmer, Valerie Millsaps

Absent: Julia Craze

Guest: Mayor Ralph McGill

Press: Suzanne Neal, Alan Sloan, Sherri Gardner Howell

Mark Littleton called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the minutes from the January meeting. One correction was made and then the minutes were approved.

Feedback for Chris Malone's initiative to involve fathers in the schools:

- Russ Barber reported that Kay Wellons, the Intermediate school principal, said they are already participating in "All Pro Dads" which has been a great program addition this year. She said Dads and Granddads could read to students, make copies, or practice math facts with students.
- Mark Littleton reported that Mike Reynolds, principal of Farragut High School, is receptive to the proposal. However, anyone participating would have to be cleared which would include drug screening. He would use volunteers in targeted areas such as tutoring where there is an ongoing need.
- Other committee members were asked to get feedback from their schools which Mark will then provide to Mr. Malone.

Feedback on Mayor's Speaker Registry:

- Mike Littleton reported that the high school already has a Speaker's Registry that is available for the teachers to call on as needed. However it was noted that the public in general is not aware of the opportunity or the need to participate. Gary Palmer pointed out that there is a link on the town website that can be used for people to volunteer to assist at the schools. However, no needs for the Farragut schools were identified on the website. It was recommended that the Farragut information channel be used to advertise the opportunity for community involvement at the schools.
- Russ Barber reported that Kay Wellons said "we might have teachers who could use guest speakers, but generally speaking due to time constraints and the volume of the curriculum, we don't have as much need for guest speakers as we once did".
- Nancy Wentz noted that the use of guest speakers or specialists in areas such as robotics might be better used in after school settings rather than during the class time.

Feedback/discussion of Mayor's Teen Council initiative:

- Mark Littleton reported that Farragut High School is receptive to "mentorships" with Town leaders similar to other mentorships the school now has.
- Mayor McGill said he was thinking of something not part of the schools but more tied to the town with help from the schools in identifying students who would like to understand what public service is all about.

- Sherrie Gardner Howell of the Farragut Shoppers News said the paper was interested in sponsoring a teen council for the town. The paper would host a breakfast to kick off the year and then host a dinner at the end of the year to honor the student participants. It would be similar to what now exists in Blount County. She said three to four students from each of the Blount County schools are nominated to participate on a “Teen Council”. This has become very popular with the students, partly because it looks good on their college applications. Mayor McGill will contact the group in Blount County and consider it as a model for what he would like to do.

Resolution for ERC’s “Talking Points” for the Board of Aldermen:

- Mike Singletary reviewed the revised letter and “Talking Points” concerning the needs of Farragut schools that he had prepared to provide to the BOMA for use when talking to community groups. Nancy Wentz also provided a flyer prepared by FHS documenting accomplishments of the school. The committee voted to go forward with the information.
- Mayor McGill recommended that a representative from the committee present the letter to the BOMA at their next meeting on February 14 at 7 pm. Mike will take the lead in the presentation.

Nancy Wentz reported that she had authorized her contact at FHS to proceed with making the banners concerning the support they are receiving from the Town of Farragut but had not received feedback as to their status. She will pursue and report back when they are completed.

Meeting was adjourned